

Subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives

§ 710.501 Early acquisition.

(a) *Real property acquisition.* The State may initiate acquisition of real property at any time it has the legal authority to do so based on program or project considerations. The State may undertake early acquisition for corridor preservation, access management, or other purposes.

(b) *Eligible costs.* Acquisition costs incurred by a State agency prior to executing a project agreement with the FHWA are not eligible for Federal-aid reimbursement. However, such costs may become eligible for use as a credit towards the State's share of a Federal-aid project if the following conditions are met:

(1) The property was lawfully obtained by the State;

(2) The property was not land described in 23 U.S.C. 138;

(3) The property was acquired in accordance with the provisions of 49 CFR part 24;

(4) The State complied with the requirements of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–2000d–4);

(5) The State determined and the FHWA concurs that the action taken did not influence the environmental assessment for the project, including:

(i) The decision on need to construct the project;

(ii) The consideration of alternatives; and

(iii) The selection of the design or location; and

(6) The property will be incorporated into a Federal-aid project.

(7) The original project agreement covering the project was executed on or after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Reimbursement.* In addition to meeting all provisions in paragraph (b) of this section, the FHWA approval for reimbursement for early acquisition costs, including costs associated with displacement of owners or tenants, requires the STD to demonstrate that:

(1) Prior to acquisition, the STD made the certifications and determinations required by 23 U.S.C. 108(c)(2)(C) and (D); and

(2) The STD obtained concurrence from the Environmental Protection Agency in the findings made under paragraph (b)(5) of this section regarding the NEPA process.

§ 710.503 Protective buying and hardship acquisition.

(a) *General conditions.* Prior to the STD obtaining final environmental approval, the STD may request FHWA agreement to provide reimbursement for advance acquisition of a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels, to prevent imminent development and increased costs on the preferred location (Protective Buying), or to alleviate hardship to a property owner or owners on the preferred location (Hardship Acquisition), provided the following conditions are met:

(1) The project is included in the currently approved STIP;

(2) The STD has complied with applicable public involvement requirements in 23 CFR parts 450 and 771;

(3) A determination has been completed for any property subject to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 138; and

(4) Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are completed for properties subject to 16 U.S.C. 470(f) (historic properties).

(b) *Protective buying.* The STD must clearly demonstrate that development of the property is imminent and such development would limit future transportation choices. A significant increase in cost may be considered as an element justifying a protective purchase.

(c) *Hardship acquisitions.* The STD must accept and concur in a request for a hardship acquisition based on a property owner's written submission that:

(1) Supports the hardship acquisition by providing justification, on the basis of health, safety or financial reasons, that remaining in the property poses an undue hardship compared to others; and

(2) Documents an inability to sell the property because of the impending project, at fair market value, within a time period that is typical for properties not impacted by the impending project.

(d) *Environmental decisions.* Acquisition of property under this section

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shall not influence the environmental assessment of a project, including the decision relative to the need to construct the project or the selection of a specific location.

§ 710.505 Real property donations.

(a) *Donations of property being acquired.* A non-governmental owner whose real property is required for a Federal-aid project may donate the property to the STD. Prior to accepting the property, the owner must be informed by the agency of his/her right to receive just compensation for the property. The owner shall also be informed of his/her right to an appraisal of the property by a qualified appraiser, unless the STD determines that an appraisal is unnecessary because the valuation problem is uncomplicated and the fair market value is estimated at no more than \$2500, or the State appraisal waiver limit approved by the FHWA, whichever is greater. All donations of property received prior to the approval of the NEPA document must meet environmental requirements as specified in 23 U.S.C. 323(d).

(b) *Credit for donations.* Donations of real property may be credited to the State's matching share of the project. Credit to the State's matching share for donated property shall be based on fair market value established on the earlier of the following: either the date on which the donation becomes effective, or the date on which equitable title to the property vests in the State. The fair market value shall not include increases or decreases in value caused by the project. Donations may be made at anytime during the development of a project. The STD shall develop sufficient documentation to indicate compliance with paragraph (a) of this section and to support the amount of credit applied. The total credit cannot exceed the State's pro-rata share under the project agreement to which it is applied.

(c) *Donations and conveyances in exchange for construction features or services.* A property owner may donate property in exchange for construction features or services. The value of the donation is limited to the fair market value of property donated less the cost of the construction features or serv-

ices. If the value of the donated property exceeds the cost of the construction features or services, the difference may be eligible for a credit to the State's share of project costs.

§ 710.507 State and local contributions.

(a) *General.* Real property owned by State and local governments incorporated within a federally funded project can be used as a credit toward the State matching share of total project cost. A credit cannot exceed the State's matching share required by the project agreement.

(b) *Effective date.* Credits can be applied to projects where the initial project agreement is executed after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Exemptions.* Credits are not available for lands acquired with any form of Federal financial assistance, or for lands already incorporated and used for transportation purposes.

(d) *State contributions.* Real property acquired with State funds and required for federally-assisted projects may support a credit toward the non-Federal share of project costs. The STD must prepare documentation supporting all credits including:

(1) A certification that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR 710.501(b); and

(2) Justification of the value of credit applied. Acquisition costs incurred by the State to acquire title can be used as justification for the value of the real property.

(e) *Credit for local government contributions.* A contribution by a unit of local government of real property which is offered for credit, in connection with a project eligible for assistance under this title, shall be credited against the State share of the project at fair market value of the real property. Property may also be presented for project use with the understanding that no credit for its use is sought. The STD shall assure that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR 710.501(b), and that documentation justifies the amount of the credit.